The Xi Paradox: Reconfigured Party Power, Long-Term Risks

Entwistle, Phil

Journal of Current Chinese Affairs

China aktuell

Topical Issue: State and Society under Xi Jinping
Guest Editor: Phil Entwistle

Entwistle, Phil (2018),
The Xi Paradox: Reconfigured Party Power, Long-Term Risks, in: *Journal of Current Chinese Affairs*, 47, 3, 3–16.

URN: http://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:gbv:18-4-11797

ISSN: 1868-4874 (online), ISSN: 1868-1026 (print)

The online version of this introduction and the other articles can be found at:
<www.CurrentChineseAffairs.org>

Published by
GIGA German Institute of Global and Area Studies, Institute of Asian Studies, in co-operation with the Lau China Institute at King's College London, and Hamburg University Press.

To subscribe to the print edition: <ias@giga-hamburg.de>
For an e-mail alert please register at: <www.CurrentChineseAffairs.org>

The *Journal of Current Chinese Affairs* is part of the GIGA Journal Family, which also includes *Africa Spectrum*, *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs* and *Journal of Politics in Latin America*: <www.giga-journal-family.org>.

STAATS- UND UNIVERSITÄTS-
BIBLIOTHEK
HAMBURG
CARL VON OSSIETZKY

GIGA
German Institute of Global and Area Studies
Institute of Asian Studies

The Xi Paradox: Reconfigured Party Power, Long-Term Risks

Phil ENTWISTLE

When Xi Jinping acceded to the position of General Secretary in November 2012, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) was both enjoying high levels of popular support and facing an intimidating array of challenges (Tang 2016). As the working-age population peaked and the domestic labour market tightened, China was beginning a potentially painful reconfiguration of its economic model away from the export-driven, low-end, and ecologically costly manufacturing that had served it so well since the early 1990s (*Economist* 2015; Minzner 2015). Internationally, China's wider global economic footprint, combined with its growing military power, meant that the necessity, the desirability, or even the possibility of continuing to adhere to the doctrine of "hiding one's light under a bushel" (韬光养晦, *taoguang yanghui*) was becoming increasingly open to question (Chen and Wang 2011).

Furthermore, China's domestic political difficulties had been nearing crisis point. The growing popular perception that China's political elites were privately enriching themselves at the cost of public well-being had been fuelled by events such as the Wenzhou train crash a year earlier, and by investigative reports into the financial assets of well-connected families (Barboza 2012; Osnos 2014). Widespread ownership of smartphones and the spread of social media technologies, most notably Weibo, the microblogging platform, had made it easier for concerned citizens to expose and spread news of local corruption and its perpetrators (Sullivan 2013). Crowning it all, the Bo Xilai affair had uncovered malpractice at the highest levels of Chinese politics and exposed divisions within the CCP elite itself (Garnaut 2012).

The 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China in Autumn 2017 marked five years since Xi acceded to the position of General Secretary of the CCP and provides a good opportunity to evaluate his administration's success in handling these challenges, and to take stock of the changes taking place in Chinese politics and society. With this aim, the articles in this topical issue are drawn from

those first presented at the workshop "State and Society under Xi Jinping: The First Five Years," held on 5 January 2018 at Senate House, University of London.[1]

Xi's tenure has seen a considerable reconfiguration of China's party state and its relationship with society – changes that are having an impact not just on the country's domestic politics, but also on its interactions with the wider world. Xi came to office promising to fulfil the "China Dream" of "the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation" (Wang 2013). Central to this programme has been Xi's attempt to re-assert central control and discipline within the CCP, to re-assert Party control over the state, and to re-assert party-state control over society (Mai 2017):

> The whole Party must realise that if our Party management is not strong, if our Party governance is not strict, then the prominent contradictions and problems that are pressing concerns for the masses of the people will not be resolved soon enough; the foundations of our Party's rule will shake and collapse. (Xi 2017; author's own translation)

This project of strengthening central control has both structural and ideological aspects to it – both of which raise multiple questions for academic researchers.

First, in terms of structure, the issue of de-institutionalisation – especially its extent and novelty – has been the subject of intense scholarly debate. Numerous studies have argued that prior to Xi's accession, the Chinese political system was becoming increasingly institutionalised in character: the development of specialised formal institutions, norm-bound political behaviour, and channels of popular input into the policymaking process were all posited as important factors underlying the CCP's resilience (Holbig and Gilley 2010; Lee

1 The workshop "State and Society under Xi Jinping: The First Five Years," was organised by Phil Entwistle (Perrett Laver), Liam McCarthy-Cotter (University of the West of England), and Jonathan Sullivan (University of Nottingham), in association with the Political Studies Association's Politics and Policy in Southeast and East Asia Specialist Group, the Centre for Politics in Africa, Asia and the Middle East (AAME), Royal Holloway, University of London, the China Policy Institute, University of Nottingham, and the School of Languages, Cultures and Linguistics, University College Dublin. The workshop also received generous funding from the Chiang Ching-kuo Foundation for International Scholarly Exchange.

2017; Minzner 2015; Nathan 2003). Institutionalisation, it was claimed, enabled the CCP to consolidate legitimacy in the eyes of the public and its own elites, and to avoid messy succession crises such as the one which followed the death of Mao Zedong in 1976.

However, some analysts contend that under Xi this process of institutionalisation has gone into reverse. He has broken prior conventions, introducing a more personalised form of rule, re-politicising the policymaking process via the side-lining of state bodies in favour of Party institutions, crushing political rivals, filling the Politburo and Politburo Standing Committee with loyalists, and, most recently, abolishing presidential term limits (Economy 2018; Minzner 2015; Wang and Zeng 2016). Others disagree, arguing that Xi's personal power flows from his institutional position, that the reconfiguration of China's formal policymaking apparatus and informal rules constitutes institution-building rather than de-institutionalisation, and that, away from the headlines, other forms of institutionalisation continue apace (Lee 2017; Wang 2017; Wang and Zeng 2016).

A second structural trend that researchers have highlighted has been Xi's alleged re-centralisation of power to Party headquarters. Evidence cited in support of this idea has included Xi's anti-corruption campaign, the stricter enforcement of Party discipline, his emphasis on "top-level design" (顶层设计, *dingceng sheji*), and the expansion of the role of Leading Small Groups in the policymaking process (Ahlers and Stepan 2016; Heilmann 2016; Lee 2017). In wider society, those who had previously enjoyed a small sliver of organisational and ideological freedom, such as lawyers, universities, businesses, think tanks, and bloggers, have experienced increasing regulation and even repression (Economy 2018; Minzner 2015). Grass-roots Party organisations have been strengthened in terms of their penetration of Chinese businesses, and their involvement in these firms' decision-making (Economy 2018).

The party-state security apparatus has taken an increasingly active, some would say intrusive, role in its use of artificial intelligence-enhanced surveillance to ensure social control and guard against threats to stability (Botsman 2017; *Economist* 2018). This has reached its most egregious extreme in Xinjiang, in the west of China, where members of the Uighur ethnic minority have been subject to blanket surveillance and mass incarceration (Rajagopalan 2017; Zenz 2019). Protests in Hong Kong over universal suffrage and the proposed

2019 extradition bill have their roots in the fear that under Xi the CCP has become increasingly meddlesome in the Special Administrative Region's society and politics, and has thereby violated the autonomy that the territory had been guaranteed under the 1984 Sino-British Joint Declaration (Kaeding 2017). Further afield, the alleged use of student organisations affiliated with local People's Republic of China embassies to monitor overseas Chinese nationals has drawn significant media attention – and no small amount of controversy (Allen-Ebrahimian 2018; Benner et al. 2018).

However, other observers have pointed to centralising trends underway long before Xi's coming to office – although they have also raised doubts as to the effectiveness of such measures in terms of ensuring even and consistent enforcement of central policy (see Van Rooij et al. 2017 on environmental policy; Yang 2017 on stability maintenance). It is therefore necessary to ask to what extent these perceived trends reflect the reality of China, and, if so, to what extent they represent a continuation of or break from political developments underway prior to 2012.

Inextricably linked to these structural aspects of Xi's practice of power is the question of ideology. In 2012 – indeed, throughout much of the preceding decade – the observer of Chinese politics could be forgiven for thinking that, on the surface at least, the CCP was communist in name only (Pei 2002; cf. McGregor 2010). Several of this author's own respondents, speaking in 2011 and 2012, claimed that it was career advancement and not Marxist ideology that had originally motivated them to join the Party (see also, Dickson 2014):

> If you're excellent enough, the teachers will let you join the Party. […] But not many people will tell you that to join the Party is to choose a kind of political belief. (Anonymous 1 2012)

> I think that the Party's core values are very weak. [...] I know about a thousand Party members; not a single one of them takes these things seriously [当真, *dangzhen*]. (Anonymous 2 2011)

During his early years in power, Xi himself worried as much. In an August 2013 speech, he is alleged to have likened the Party's ideological weakness to calcium deficiency, arguing that it was a spiritual form of rickets – leading to "political deterioration, economic greed, moral degeneracy and corruption of life" (China Copyright and Media 2013). Xi has set out to change this state of affairs with a renewed emphasis on the control, renewal, and promotion of ideology,

first within the Party and second, by extension, the state – but also in wider society too (Ahlers and Stepan 2016; Brown 2017; Saich 2016; Wang and Zeng 2016; Zhao 2016). His crowning achievement in this regard is, of course, the incorporation into the CCP constitution of "Xi Jinping Thought," or to give it its full name "Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era" (习近平新时代中国特色社会主义思想, *Xi Jinping xin shidai Zhongguo tese shehuizhuyi sixiang*). Its inclusion means that Xi's influence over the political direction of the CCP is almost certain to outlast his now indefinite period of tenure as general secretary (Phillips 2017). Xi Jinping Thought has been disseminated into wider Chinese society through the official media, university and school curricula, and through newly established "Xi Thought Institutes" (Shepherd 2018).

Nevertheless, questions remain over how important ideology is in practice – and indeed over the role that it plays in Xi's project. As with the structural developments outlined above, how much of a departure from the Hu–Wen years do these ideological changes represent? Some would argue that, despite concerns to the contrary, ideology never really went away (Holbig and Gilley 2010; McGregor 2010); the "core socialist values" that occupy a prominent place in Xi Jinping Thought, and which the administration has promoted with enthusiasm, were in fact first voiced by Hu Jintao (Gow 2017). There is also the question of content: What exactly is Xi Jinping Thought? How important is the legacy of Maoism? How does this all sit with the Party's recently renewed emphasis upon China's traditional culture (Holbig and Gilley 2010)? Finally, to what extent does ideology constitute a limit on Xi's exercise of power – and how strong is it relative to limits of a more structural nature (Brown 2017; MacFarquhar 2016; Shih 2016; Wang and Zeng 2016)?

The diverse articles included in this topical issue focus upon these interrelated themes. Yuanyuan Liu examines televised confession, a tool of ideological control that has been used with increasing frequency during Xi's tenure. Drawing on the case of the imprisoned bookseller Gui Minhai, Liu's critical discourse analysis reveals that under Xi televised confession combines Maoist tactics with appeals to traditional family values, and more recent emphases on legal discourse and nationalism to enforce party-state dominance and ideological conformity.

However, unlike Mao-era confessions, mass participation is absent, which raises questions about the extent to which Xi can be portrayed as "the new Mao." Furthermore, by dint of its inclusion in a well-known current affairs programme, Gui's confession is not presented as a Cultural Revolution-style public spectacle but rather as the everyday story of another common criminal brought to justice by the state. Liu therefore argues that "its domestic propaganda value lies precisely in its banality, which blends into the Party's everyday narrative of what the world looks like, who the Chinese should be, and how they should behave" (Liu 2018: 37).

Aleksandra Kubat highlights the insertion of elements of traditional morality into the CCP's legitimation strategy. Kubat contends that Xi has explicitly promoted cultural tradition as a means of improving Party theory, state governance, and cadre performance; as evidence, she examines the way in which Xi's specific interpretation of traditional culture has been communicated through the resources published by the country's cadre-training institutions.

The charitable reading of this trend is that the CCP is now rediscovering pre-modern Chinese social and political thought and exploring its potential for providing ethical guidance at a time of unsettling socio-economic change and perceived moral corruption. This is a welcome corrective to the excesses of the Mao era, during which the Party – whose ideological roots lay in the iconoclastic May Fourth Movement – was in danger of throwing out the baby of traditional Chinese culture with the bathwater of regressive "feudal" practices. The less charitable reading, meanwhile, is that this enthusiasm for "excellent traditional culture" is a post hoc selective exhumation of classical Chinese philosophical themes in order to manufacture a sense of alignment and continuity between past and present political practice. In this way the CCP is able to position itself as the "natural, default inheritor of Chinese civilisational heritage while at the same time claiming the role of being its only legitimate carrier into the future" (Kubat 2018: 78).

Turning towards the more structural aspects of CCP organisation and recruitment, Jérôme Doyon analyses the evolution of the cadre-management system under Xi. He argues that the role of central and local Party leaders' levels of discretion in the promotion process has increased at the expense of intra-party democracy. In fact, personnel decisions are increasingly less constrained by objective

criteria based on officials' performance or age. In the short term, this strengthens CCP leaders' control over personnel, and not only at the central level; however, in the long term, Doyon argues that it may result in limited turnover among local and central officials and eventually lead to gerontocracy, with young and talented cadres unable to achieve promotion.

Doyon's analysis adds nuance to the debate over political centralisation: Xi has both concentrated power in his own hands *and* strengthened the hands of local Party leaders. In doing so, he has reinforced rather than undermined a key feature of China's political system: the combination of "high levels of local autonomy with a strong Party hierarchy," as captured by Pierre Landry's concept of "decentralized authoritarianism" (Landry 2008, cited in Doyon 2018: 102–103).

Dylan Loh employs field theory to examine Xi's attempts at reasserting control over the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), and the effects that this has had upon China's foreign policy behaviour. In a nutshell, field theory studies how individuals and groups construct social fields. Social fields, in turn, refer to temporal-spatial arenas where actors compete and cooperate for resources. Loh argues that Xi has introduced a set of incentives that encourage diplomats to demonstrate greater personal loyalty towards himself in the local diplomatic field, and greater assertiveness towards foreign actors in the transnational-transversal diplomatic field.

Loh's primary theoretical contribution here is in examining what happens when overlapping fields misalign – a hitherto neglected area of study within the existing academic literature. Furthermore, in drawing upon cases of China's interaction with its Asian neighbours, Loh's analysis also represents a departure from the until now somewhat Eurocentric focus of the practice agenda in International Relations scholarship. In terms of the practical implications for China's politics, Loh argues that the diplomatic assertiveness that has emerged as a result of increased central control has had the effect of disrupting the previously held norms of international diplomacy and re-shaping them in China's favour – but also of strengthening resistance to Chinese pressure from other actors such as foreign states.

Taken together, the articles presented in this topical issue paint a picture of an evolving party state, one in which conformity to the CCP's ideological narrative and personal loyalty to the person of Xi – in whom it has become increasingly embodied – have grown in im-

portance. This ideological narrative combines traditional, Maoist, nationalist, and legal-rational elements, or, rather, the specific CCP interpretations thereof, and has become key to Xi's centralisation of power. It has been undergirded by a restructuring of incentives – both within the party state and in wider society – so as to reward displays of fealty and punish disloyalty.

Furthermore, these articles add elements of nuance to the debates around the influence of Xi on China's state and society since 2012. First, while they present evidence that generally supports the notion that China has undergone a process of political centralisation under Xi, they also serve to demonstrate that this shift in the configuration of power should not be viewed as a straightforward zero-sum game. Doyon's analysis demonstrates that Xi's increased insistence upon loyalty to himself has paradoxically served to strengthen the discretion and agency of Party officials at every level, even as it has simultaneously emasculated the institutions of intra-party democracy. Similarly, Loh has shown that increased central control has in some ways served to constrain the actions of MOFA officials – for example, in their ability to build informal relationships with foreign diplomats. On the other hand, it has also empowered Chinese diplomats to challenge the norms that had hitherto characterised the transnational diplomatic field – and, indeed, to shape them in China's favour.

Second, these contributions to this topical issue shed further light on the extent to which Xi represents a return to Maoist politics. Indeed, here the different analyses give us reason for caution. Parallels have been drawn between the two leaders; Xi has condemned the "historical nihilists" who allegedly emphasise the discontinuities between China's Mao and post-Mao eras; and, there are apparent similarities – the strengthening of personal, ideological, and structural control – between their respective projects too.

Ultimately, however, Xi's political programme is fundamentally different from that of Mao. As Kubat outlines, this is most immediately evident in the raw materials out of which Xi has chosen to construct his ideological agenda. To a greater extent than any of his predecessors, Xi has explicitly attempted to fuse China's communist and pre-communist ideological traditions – thereby casting the CCP as the custodian of Chinese culture, rather than its usurper.

However, a less-remarked upon but perhaps more profound difference highlighted by Liu and Kubat in particular is in the relative

agency and importance ascribed to state and society. Mao's Cultural Revolution arguably represented a re-assertion of the revolutionary agency of the masses against the state, or, at least, the bourgeois elements therein (Andreas 2002). While Xi is keen to appear close to the people, on his watch the role assigned in Party ideology to the participation and agency of the Chinese public has been minimised. He has shown no interest in capturing and unleashing the power of the masses against his enemies, a reticence perhaps informed by his family's own traumatic experience during the Cultural Revolution (Buckley and Tatlow 2015; Minzner 2015).

Third, while Xi's centralisation of power may have positive short-term consequences in terms of enhanced central control over Party, state, and society, it also carries long-term risks. Loh has demonstrated the ways in which China's increased diplomatic assertiveness, resulting from the restructuring of incentives within the local (domestic) diplomatic field, has already begun to alienate potential diplomatic partners and provoke pushbacks (see also, *Economist* 2019). Similarly, Doyon's analysis suggests that the quality of China's cadre corps may be compromised by the increased weight placed upon official discretion in promotion decisions, and by the de-prioritisation of intra-party democracy and objective performance measures. Likewise, the removal of age-limit norms risks a slide away from meritocracy and towards gerontocracy. This adds to the growing weight of popular and academic commentary claiming that trends that would seem (intentionally or not) to strengthen the hand of the party state in the short term may serve to weaken it in the long term (Economy 2018; Minzner 2015).

The topical issue therefore promises to consolidate and further our scholarly understanding of how Xi has exercised power since acceding to office in 2012. Its contribution is not limited to the academic world, however. The workshop at which these articles were delivered attracted a diverse audience including journalists, think tank researchers, foreign policy-makers, and those engaged in business and trade with China, as well as interested members of the public – evidence that, given the increasing centrality of China in world politics, there is a keen hunger for the theoretically and empirically driven insight that China-focused social scientists can provide.[2]

2 The views in this Introduction reflect my own and not those of my employer.

References

Ahlers, Anna L., and Matthias Stepan (2016), Top-Level Design and Local-Level Paralysis: Local Politics in Times of Political Centralization, in: Sebastian Heilmann and Matthias Stepan (eds), *China's Core Executive: Leadership Styles, Structures and Processes Under Xi Jinping*, Berlin: Mercator Institute of Chinese Studies, 34–39.

Allen-Ebrahimian, Bethany (2018), China's Long Arm Reaches into American Campuses, in: *Foreign Policy*, 7 March, online: <https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/03/07/chinas-long-arm-reaches-into-american-campuses-chinese-students-scholars-association-university-communist-party/> (5 August 2018).

Andreas, Joel (2002), Battling Over Political and Cultural Power during the Chinese Cultural Revolution, in: *Theory and Society*, 31, 4, 463–519.

Anonymous 1 (2012), interview with 26-year-old female, CCP member, Beijing.

Anonymous 2 (2011), interview with 24-year-old female, non-CCP member, Beijing.

Barboza, David (2012), Family of Wen Jiabao Holds a Hidden Fortune in China, in: *The New York Times*, 25 October, online: <www.nytimes.com/2012/10/26/business/global/family-of-wen-jiabao-holds-a-hidden-fortune-in-china.html> (23 August 2018).

Benner, Thorsten, Jan Gaspers, Mareike Ohlberg, Lucrezia Poggetti, and Kristin Shi-Kupfer (2018), *Authoritarian Advance: Responding to China's Growing Political Influence in Europe*, February, online: <www.merics.org/sites/default/files/2018-02/GPPi_MERICS_Authoritarian_Advance_2018_0.pdf> (5 August 2019).

Botsman, Rachel (2017), Big Data Meets Big Brother as China Moves to Rate Its Citizens, in: *Wired*, October, 57, 7, 1–13.

Brown, Kerry (2017), The Powers of Xi Jinping, in: *Asian Affairs*, 48, 1, 17–26.

Buckley, Chris, and Didi Kirsten Tatlow (2015), Cultural Revolution Shaped Xi Jinping, From Schoolboy to Survivor, in: *New York Times*, 25 September.

Chen, Dingding, and Jianwei Wang (2011), Lying Low No More?: China's New Thinking on the Tao Guang Yang Hui Strategy, in: *China: An International Journal*, 9, 2, 195–216.

China Copyright and Media (2013), *Xi Jinping's 19 August Speech Revealed? (Translation)*, 12 November, online: <http://chinacopy

rightandmedia.wordpress.com/2013/11/12/xi-jinpings-19-august-speech-revealed-translation/> (1 March 2014).

Dickson, Bruce J. (2014), Who Wants to Be a Communist? Career Incentives and Mobilized Loyalty in China, in: *The China Quarterly*, 217, 2014, 42–68.

Economist (2019), Hope Remains for Western Solidarity. Look at Embassies in Beijing, 17 April.

Economist (2018), China has Turned Xinjiang into a Police State Like no Other, 31 May, online: <www.economist.com/briefing/2018/05/31/china-has-turned-xinjiang-into-a-police-state-like-no-other> (23 August 2018).

Economist (2015), A Tightening Grip, 12 March, online: <www.economist.com/briefing/2015/03/12/a-tightening-grip> (9 August 2019).

Economy, Elizabeth C. (2018), China's New Revolution: The Reign of Xi Jinping, in: *Foreign Affairs*, 97, 3, 60–74.

Garnaut, John (2012), *The Rise and Fall of the House of Bo: How A Murder Exposed The Cracks In China's Leadership*, London: Penguin.

Gow, Michael (2017), The Core Socialist Values of the Chinese Dream: Towards a Chinese Integral State, in: *Critical Asian Studies*, 49, 1, 92–116.

Heilmann, Sebastian (2016), Introduction: China's Core Executive: Leadership Styles, Structures and Processes under Xi Jinping, in: Sebastian Heilmann, and Matthias Stepan (eds), *China's Core Executive: Leadership Styles, Structures and Processes Under Xi Jinping*, Berlin: Mercator Institute of Chinese Studies, 6–10.

Holbig, Heike, and Bruce Gilley (2010), Reclaiming Legitimacy in China, in: *Politics & Policy*, 38, 3, 395–422.

Kaeding, Malte Philipp (2017), The Rise of 'Localism' in Hong Kong, in: *Journal of Democracy*, 28, 1, 157–171.

Landry, Pierre F. (2008), *Decentralized Authoritarianism in China: The Communist Party's Control of Local Elites in the Post-Mao Era*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lee, Sangkuk (2017), An Institutional Analysis of Xi Jinping's Centralization of Power, in: *Journal of Contemporary China*, 26, 105, 325–336.

MacFarquhar, Roderick (2016), Leadership Styles at the Party Centre: From Mao Zedong to Xi Jinping, in: Sebastian Heilmann, and Matthias Stepan (eds), *China's Core Executive: Leadership Styles,*

Structures and Processes Under Xi Jinping, Berlin: Mercator Institute of Chinese Studies, 14–17.

Mai, Jun (2017), The 'One Simple Message' in Xi Jinping's Five Years of Epic Speeches, in: *South China Morning Post*, 2 November, online: <www.scmp.com/news/china/policies-politics/article/2118170/xis-epic-speeches-can-be-summed-one-simple-message-says> (23 August 2018).

McGregor, Richard (2010), *The Party: The Secretive World of China's Communist Rulers*, London: Allen Lane.

Minzner, Carl (2015), China After the Reform Era, in: *Journal of Democracy*, 26, 3, 129–143.

Nathan, Andrew J. (2003), Authoritarian Resilience, in: *Journal of Democracy*, 14, 1, 6–17.

Osnos, Evan (2014), *Age of Ambition: Chasing Fortune, Truth and Faith in the New China*, London: Random House.

Pei, Minxin (2002), China's Governance Crisis, in: *Foreign Affairs*, 81, 5, 96–109.

Phillips, Tom (2017), Xi Jinping Becomes Most Powerful Leader since Mao with China's Change to Constitution, in: *The Guardian*, 24 October, online: <www.theguardian.com/world/2017/oct/24/xi-jinping-mao-thought-on-socialism-china-constitution> (23 August 2018).

Rajagopalan, Megha (2017), This is what a 21st-Century Police State Really Looks Like, in: *BuzzFeed News*, 17 October, online: <www.buzzfeednews.com/article/meghara/the-police-state-of-the-future-is-already-here> (5 August 2019).

Saich, Tony (2016), How China's Citizens View the Quality of Governance under Xi Jinping, in: *Journal of Chinese Governance*, 1, 1, 1–20.

Shepherd, C. (2018), In China, Universities Seek to Plant 'Xi Thought' in Minds of Students, in: *Reuters*, 22 June, online: <https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-china-politics-education/in-china-universities-seek-to-plant-xi-thought-in-minds-of-students-idUKKBN1JI0HV> (23 August 2018).

Shih, Victor (2016), Efforts at Exterminating Factionalism under Xi Jinping: Will Xi Jinping Dominate Chinese Politics after the 19th Party Congress?, in Sebastian Heilmann, and Matthias Stepan (eds), *China's Core Executive: Leadership Styles, Structures and Processes*

Under Xi Jinping, Berlin: Mercator Institute of Chinese Studies, 18–21.

Sullivan, Jonathan (2013), China's Weibo: Is Faster Different?, in: *New Media & Society*, 16, 1, 24–37.

Tang, Wenfang (2016), *Populist Authoritarianism: Chinese Political Culture and Regime Sustainability*, New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Van Rooij, Benjamin, Qiaoqiao Zhu, Na Li, and Qiliang Wang (2017), Centralizing Trends and Pollution Law Enforcement in China, in: *China Quarterly*, 231, 583–606.

Wang, Zhen (2017), Government Work Reports: Securing State Legitimacy through Institutionalization, in: *China Quarterly*, 229, 195–204.

Wang, Zheng (2013), Not Rising, But Rejuvenating: The 'Chinese Dream', in: *The Diplomat*, 5 February, online: <https://the diplomat.com/2013/02/chinese-dream-draft/> (23 August 2018).

Wang, Zhengxu, and Jinghan Zeng (2016), Xi Jinping: The Game Changer of Chinese Elite Politics?, in: *Contemporary Politics*, 22, 4, 469–486.

Xi, Jinping (习近平) (2017), 习近平在党的十八届六中全会第二次全体会议上的讲话（节选） (Xi Jinping zai dang de shiba jie liu zhongquanhui di er ci quanti huiyi shang de jianghua (jiexuan), Excerpts from Xi Jinping's Speech to the 2nd Plenary Meeting of the 6th Plenum of the 18th Central Committee of the Communist), in: 人民网 (*Renmin Wang*, *People's Daily Online*), online: <http://cpc.people.com.cn/n1/2017/0103/c64094-28995008.html> (23 August 2018).

Yang, Dali L. (2017), China's Troubled Quest for Order: Leadership, Organization and the Contradictions of the Stability Maintenance Regime, in: *Journal of Contemporary China*, 26, 103, 35–53.

Zenz, Adrian (2019), 'Thoroughly Reforming them Towards a Healthy Heart Attitude': China's Political Re-Education Campaign in Xinjiang, in: *Central Asian Survey*, 38, 1, 102–128.

Zhao, Suisheng (2016), Xi Jinping's Maoist Revival, in: *Journal of Democracy*, 27, 3, 83–97.

Dr. Phil Entwistle is Senior Research Associate at the London office of Perrett Laver, an international executive search firm. He advises on leadership searches in the Global Research Leadership practice, which include both professorial and managerial roles. He previously held posts at University College Dublin and the Mercator Institute for China Studies (MERICS), having completed his DPhil in Politics at the University of Oxford. His academic research interests include Protestant Christianity and political engagement in China, Chinese nationalism, and political support. He is the author of "Faith in China: Religious Belief and National Narratives Amongst Young, Urban Chinese Protestants," published in *Nations and Nationalism* in 2016.
E-mail: <phil.entwistle@perrettlaver.com>

Contents

State and Society under Xi Jinping

Introduction

Research Articles

Research Article

Analysis